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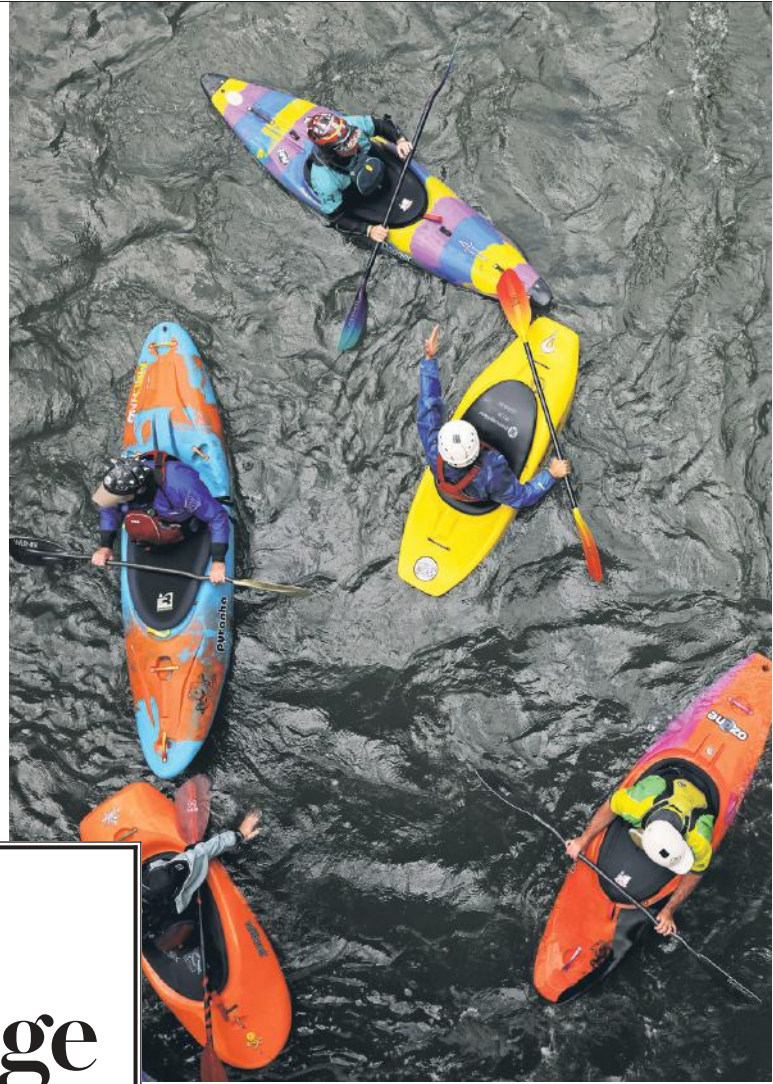
**Promise
Yourself the
Moon**
The allure of a
crescent-shaped
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FASHION | FOOD | DESIGN | TRAVEL | GEAR

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

Saturday/Sunday, May 21 - 22, 2022 | **D1**



TAKE MONDAY OFF

A Blue Ridge Joy Ride

This three-day road trip across the
highlands of North Carolina and
Tennessee takes full advantage of the
Appalachian spring, with pit stops for
waterfalls and hush puppies



RANGE OF OPTIONS Clockwise from left: The Marked Tree Vineyard, which opened in Flat Rock, N.C., in 2015, is one of a handful of wine growers in the newly formed Crest of the Blue Ridge AVA; Class III and IV rapids on Tennessee's Ocoee River draw river rats from April to October; the main street in Highlands, N.C., an old-money resort town high up in the Blue Ridge Mountains; Elizabeth Leigh Inn, a four-room inn with a verdant garden in Hendersonville, N.C.

By ANDREW NELSON

CRAVE ADVENTURE? Follow the Appalachian spring from Charlotte, N.C., to Nashville, Tenn., some 480 miles across the Blue Ridge Mountains and Cumberland Plateau via Highways US-74 W and US-64 W. It's a less predictable itinerary than the well-hyped Blue Ridge Parkway ambling farther north through Asheville. This journey offers more than enough temptation to stretch the trip to a week if you're not inclined to rush. And why should you? You'll drive along the "Blue Wall," the Cherokee's name for the great escarpment marching across North Carolina into South Carolina and Georgia. In the space of 2 miles, the land jounces down some 2,000 feet—one of the steepest descents east of the Rockies. The dramatic inclines feature granite cliff domes, spouting waterfalls and temperate rainforests rich in biodiversity. The US highways conjoin and separate like snakes on a caduceus as they wriggle across the Tar Heel State and into Tennessee past hamlets like Ducktown and Hothouse, through Shelby and Hendersonville and call on Cashiers and Highlands, old-money resorts set on the high shelf of the Blue Ridge like two pieces of heirloom Spode. Hike trails searching for trillium and lady slippers. Paddle through white water in Tennessee's Ocoee River or opt for a more serene pedal in Chattanooga along one of the country's best urban bike paths before catching the sunset atop a summit, home to a real-life Hogwarts. It's wizardry indeed. Here's the itinerary:



The falafel wrap at Madison's Restaurant and Wine Garden in Highland's Old Edwards Inn.

DAY 1 / FRIDAY

7 a.m. Escape Charlotte's airport via US-74 W; glide over the Catawba River to Belmont and turn left on Main Street for Cherubs Café. Belmont, well mannered and well tended to, is the sort of place where tall people walk yellow labs and say "good morning" to perfect strangers. Part of a nonprofit that employs adults with disabilities, this unfussy diner and ice cream parlor dishes up a hot, generously proportioned meal. Try the breakfast casserole, a daily special of vegetables and eggs.

10 a.m. Back on US-74 W. The jumble of 21st century roadside architecture and trial attorney billboards wanes as you leave behind Charlotte's exurbs and strike deeper into the Piedmont. Approaching the former mill town of Shelby, take US-74 BUS W to arrive at an oak-shaded town square graced by a 1907-era courthouse transformed into the Earl Scruggs Center. A small museum, it's devoted to Shelby's most famous son: banjo-playing Earl Scruggs. The authoritative exhibits and creative digital displays explain bluegrass's roots, Scruggs' genius and the region's musical culture.

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Inside



STILL WATERS

On the surface, Lake Como's Grand Hotel Tremezzo has barely changed since 1910 **D7**

A PLEA FOR TRADITIONAL OUTDOOR FURNITURE

Tired of boxy minimalism?
So are we **D4**



ATTENTION: YOLK FOLKS

We asked a maestro of eggs to share his wisdom (and recipes) **D9**



WHAT'S BLACK AND WHITE AND RED ALL OVER?

Our story on the vogue for copper dye **D3**

ADVENTURE & TRAVEL

Blue Ridge Road Trip

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12 p.m. Come lunch, pick sides in the local food fights over who serves the best barbecue or liver-mush, a regional delicacy made from ground pig livers and offal mixed with cornmeal. Alston Bridges Barbecue (620 E. Grover St., about a 3-minute drive from the museum) wins most skirmishes dues to its proximity to the square and its savory Western Carolina chopped pork, piquant red coleslaw and the airy crunch of hush puppies. As for the liver-mush, ask for it “split and dropped” (cut thin and crisped) at the Shelby Cafe (220 S. Lafayette St.) a block off the square. If the waitress takes a shine to you, free samples are provided.

1:30 p.m. From the old courthouse drive west on US-74 BUS to US-74 W. The divided road pushing through the wooded landscape is a post-lunch palate cleanser. At mile marker 188, the first peaks loom. The easiest way to scale them is via I-26 W, which absorbs US-74 for the ride up. But before your ascent, duck down to Tryon via NC 108 West. The small arts community at the mountains’ base was the birthplace of singer and civil rights activist Nina Simone. Tryon erected a statue of the hometown chanteuse downtown on South Trade Street, lined with art and craft galleries.

3 p.m. Return to I-26 toward Hendersonville, minding the slow-running trucks grinding up the incline. Take exit 53 and a right onto Upward Road. Three miles later, a right on Deep Gap Road leads you through apple orchards to the Marked Tree Vineyard, a local favorite. The winery is one of seven wine growers in the newly formed Crest of the Blue Ridge AVA. Its modernist tasting room frames views of Mount Pisgah. Viticulture is growing up quickly in Western North Carolina, but it’s still a tween. Marked Tree, opened in 2015, is producing a well-received Vidal Blanc and Cabernet Franc.



TRAVIS DOVE FOR THE WALL STREET JOURNAL; JAMES GULLIVER HANCOCK (MAP)



A RAIN FOREST IN APPALACHIA Clockwise from top: Dry Falls in western North Carolina’s Nantahala National Forest; Alston Bridges Barbecue in Shelby, N.C., where the chopped pork plates comes with airy hush puppies; the Skyline Lodge in Highlands, N.C.

After breakfast, a two-hour loop hike leads to High Falls and Triple Falls, the latter a literal scenery-chewer in Hollywood’s “Hunger Games.”

6 p.m. Deploying your GPS, steer yourself to Hwy US-64 W and into downtown Hendersonville. Over-shadowed by nearby Asheville, the smaller city is just as likable. Settle in on 5th Avenue at the Elizabeth Leigh Inn, a small, well-upholstered B&B with a verdant garden eight walkable blocks from downtown (from \$275 a night). Hendersonville’s Main Street winds around landscaping and buzzy outdoor dining tables. For dinner try the pork tenderloin and spring asparagus at Postero with a local draft beer afterward at Shine down the street.

DAY 2 / SATURDAY

8 a.m. After breakfast, set your GPS to DuPont State Recreational Forest Visitor Center via Kanuga Road for a one-to-two hour morning loop hike to see the High Falls and Triple Falls, the latter a literal scenery-chewer in Hollywood’s “The Hunger Games.” Thanks to the falling waters’ star turns, the parking lot can fill by 10 a.m. so come early. Also keep on marked trails. Waterfalls are seductive, but

every year in North Carolina people either injure or kill themselves slipping on wet rocks.

10:30 a.m. The drive to Cashiers and Highlands takes about an hour and change from the visitor center. Take a left onto Staton Road and unleash your GPS and head for 276 W to Hwy US-64 W. The roads jog and turn but you’ll be rewarded with bucolic views. Soon after a left on Hwy. US-64 W, the highway becomes a narrow, curvaceous two-lane flanked by zaftig rhododendrons that seem to be reaching out for an embrace.

12 p.m. Western North Carolina’s cool mountain towns are where the perspiring wealthy folks of Atlanta and Charlotte ascend every summer to escape the humidity. Cashiers has no real downtown, but Highlands’ Main Street is Southern chic. Lunch at Madison’s Restaurant and Wine Garden in Relais & Chateaux’s Old Edwards Inn is a bargain and the people-watching priceless. The trout dip appetizer and falafel or chicken wraps are delectable.

1:30 p.m. The region’s reputation



as an aerie of Range Rovers, seer-sucker and privilege is on point, but that doesn’t capture its serene beauty. Eyeball lovely countryside on Highland Excursion’s rainforest expedition to Nantahala National Forest. The two-and-a-half-hour tour (\$102 per person) unfolds on a plucky Pinzgauer, an Austrian 4WD transport, and rewards you with views and waterfalls including stupendous if deceptively named Dry Falls. Bring a rain poncho.

4:30 p.m. If Bigfoot partnered with the Rat Pack they might have cooked up Highlands’ woodsy midcentury modern Skyline Lodge with its mountain views, low-slung lines and whiffs of campfire smoke. Redone in 2020/2021, the property is as chill as one of Dino’s vodka martinis (from \$329 a night). For dinner try Oak, the property’s steak house, or backtrack to Sapphire and Canyon Kitchen for a spectacular setting, and dishes such as fried mountain chicken and chili-braised osso bucco.

DAY 3 / SUNDAY

7 a.m. It’s a two-hour trip to Tennessee for a run on Ocoee River white water. Grab breakfast sandwiches and coffee in the lobby before continuing on US-64 W through wildly dramatic sylvan scenes, past Franklin to Murphy where you join up again with Hwy US-74 W. The views west to the green Tennessee mountains should make it a happy reunion. You’ll soon parallel the Ocoee, a fast-moving river controlled and regulated by TVA dams. The federal authority regularly releases torrents of water downstream creating Class III and IV rapids that

draw river rats (ages 12 and up only) eager to experience them. For less strenuous riverine outings, there’s a Tennessee River biking alternative farther on in Chattanooga.

10 a.m. To ride the rapids you need an approved guide and raft. The 23 operating licensed outfitters on Hwy-74 provide everything, including transport to and from your car. Heavily regulated, they tend to charge about \$45 average for a half day (3-to-4 hours) and \$100 for a full day (5-to-6 hours plus lunch). Trips run April-to-October. Reserve seats well ahead of arrival via the Ocoee Outfitters Association website, where companies post links to their trips and times. Afterward you’ll probably be wet and surely hungry. If you can get there before 2 p.m., Cleveland’s Rebel Drive-In for burgers and onion rings makes a satisfying option. To get there, take Hwy US-74 W (Inman St.) through downtown Cleveland. Make a left on Hwy 11/Hwy US-64 W (it’s back). Back on US-64 W, look for the I-75 S on ramp then I-24 W swoops down to Chattanooga and the Tennessee River.

2:30 p.m. Take exit 178 then US-27 N for downtown. Your GPS should get you to the trailhead at Blue Goose Hollow, the downtown neighborhood where Blues empress Bessie Smith was raised. You’ll find parking and sturdy blue city share-bikes (starting at \$8 for a day pass) on which to explore Chattanooga’s pride and joy—the 16-mile-long Riverwalk. The trails will take you up bluffs to the Hunter Museum of American Art, across highways and

even over the Tennessee via the auto-free Walnut Street Bridge.

4 p.m. Hop back in your car and your GPS can steer you onto US 41-N west across the water for an hour’s climb to Sewanee and the University of the South. At Monteagle take US 41A-N into Sewanee. The Episcopalian institution’s mountain perch, called “the Domain,” possesses an assortment of Gothic Revival architecture. Just like certain young wizards, many of the undergrads wear their black gowns around campus, a tradition connected to academic excellence. Check into the Sewanee Inn, a heavily oaked 43-room lodge known as the college’s “living room” with a bar that fills nightly with visitors, alums and faculty. From \$209 a night

7:45 p.m. Catch the sunset from the Cross, a landmark cul-de-sac on Tennessee Street affording VistaVision views of the valley below. For dinner try the Inn’s restaurant Shakerag. The clubby fare, like brussel sprouts and roasted game hen, is a favorite of the “living room.” Consider a nightcap around the outdoor fire pits.

DAY 4 / MONDAY

After breakfast, stroll over to the Quad to wander inside All Saints’ Chapel, a Gothic glory finished only in 1959 (look for the stained glass window featuring a VW Beetle). Grab lunch at Stirling’s, a campus coffee house, before a 90-minute trip to Nashville’s International Airport via I-24 W will send you, reluctantly, down from the mountaintops and home.



Visitors on Highland Excursion’s rainforest expedition in Nantahala National Forest ride in a Pinzgauer, an Austrian 4WD transport.